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BORDER ENVIRONMENT COOPERATION COMMISSION BECC BULLETIN

— LATEST NEWS & EVENTS —

Eagle Pass/Piedras Negras E-Waste Recycling Program Kicks Off

Wednesday, February 9th, the Border Environment Cooperation Commission (BECC) announced at the Piedras Negras the launching of a binational electronic waste management project for this community in the Mexican state of Coahuila and the city of Eagle Pass, Texas. The project has received \$625,000 pesos in assistance from the U.S.-Mexico Border 2020 Environmental Management Program. The Piedras Negras Technological Institute (ITPN) signed an agreement to administer the project and received the grant funds to start this collaborative effort.

In her remarks, Eglantina Canales, head of Coahuila's Secretariat of Environment (SEMA) emphasized that this project addresses the problem of the failure to collect electrical and electronic equipment at the end of their life cycle, and recognized the young students of the Green Tec-Osos group for their current involvement in this project, which will lead them in the future to further the environmental leadership that is so desperately needed in all border regions of Mexico.

During an interview, BECC Project Manager Jorge Hernandez explained that the project's main objective is to raise awareness and provide environmental education to the community to prevent the inappropriate dumping of electrical and electronic equipment into local streams and vacant lots, a practice that contributes to pollute the waters of the Rio Grande and the Amistad Reservoir. The communities of Eagle Pass and Piedras Negras are implementing a joint effort to provide for the final disposal of these wastes. He said that part of the outcome of the 18-month long project will be the establishment of permanent e-waste collection centers in Piedras Negras. This type of collection facilities is already in operation in Eagle Pass.

project intends to develop sustainable materials management practices that enhance the value of e-waste materials and contribute to their sustainable recovery and recycling. The project intends to achieve this goal by implementing an environmental and education campaign with assistance of the Piedras Negras education sector, through the Green Tec-Osos Environmental Group and its more than 200 associates, and SEMA. The project expects to collect 50 tons of e-waste in both border cities.

Alfonso Velazquez-Castellanos, Piedras Negras Municipal Trustee, on behalf of Mayor Fernando Johnston, said the City, through its participation in this project, reaffirms its commitment to environmental care.

Eagle Pass Mayor Ramsey English Cantu noted that this has been a long-standing problem for the two neighboring communities. He said the most important thing is that both communities have made everything possible to address the issue. He said in Eagle Pass, for several years, there have been a large number of TV sets and computers that are not properly recycled and have the potential to pollute the soil. He recognized the efforts being made to eliminate this type of pollution.

ITPN Director Oswaldo Padilla thanked all the government agencies that supported and joined this environmental project that has become a reality as a result of the hard work that the Green Tec-Osos group has put in during a number of years. He also said that, in addition to e-waste collection, an even

important component of the project is the series of discussions and workshops that will be provided to children and adults at local schools and subdivisions in both cities.

Manuel Ibarra, founder of the ITPN's Green Tec-Osos group, said the project developed by his organization has reached a goal of collecting 50 tons of e-waste in both border cities.

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